



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ART. X. — 1. *Original-Beiträge zur Deutschen Schaubühne.* 4 Bänd. Dresden und Leipzig. 1836 – 1839. [Original Contributions to the German Stage.]

2. *Social Life in Germany, illustrated in the Acted Dramas of Her Royal Highness, the PRINCESS AMELIA of Saxony. Translated from the German, with an Introduction and Notes, explanatory of the German Language and Manners.* By MRS. JAMESON, Author of “Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad,” “Characteristics of Women,” “Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada,” &c. London : Saunders & Otley. Vols. I. and II. pp. lxxix, 264 and 399.

SINCE Madame de Staël, no more brilliant female writer has appeared in European Literature than Mrs. Jameson. She has not the originality, the versatility, nor the fiery vigor of the renowned author of “*Corinne*”; but she has more taste, a finer appreciation of the beautiful, a keener insight into the mysteries of art, and a higher style of æsthetic criticism. Her first work, the “*Diary of an Ennuyée*,” was published anonymously, many years ago. That book was deeply tinged with a sentimental hue, which was vastly attractive to imaginative young people of both sexes ; but besides this, and better than this, it contained the finest descriptions of Italian scenery that have ever been written, glowing and eloquent discussions of the merits of the great masters of art in Italy, and personal characteristics, all wrought up in a copious, elegant, and brilliant style, which even then gave an earnest of the great success which the author was destined to attain in after years. The narrative part of the work drew from many tender-hearted readers tears of regret at the untimely fate of one so young and so accomplished ; and while she was growing in strength, and imping her wing for a bolder flight, they were indulging in silent sorrow, that a fair woman, who had moved them so deeply by her sad eloquence, should have died broken-hearted in the midst of her swan-like strains. We remember to have read, in a journal of no small merit, the “*Southern Literary Messenger*,” a notice of the American edition of the “*Diary*,” in which the particulars of the melancholy story were solemnly recited, long after Mrs. Jameson had become widely known as a living, healthy,

hearty, and most agreeable English woman, who was likely to live a long physical life, and certain to enjoy a literary immortality ; — so deep was the impression made by that tale of woe upon the public mind. A warning this, (we may say, in passing,) to all literary ladies, not to commit themselves, by pretending to die before they mean to do so. People do not like to spend their tears, — those precious pearly drops, — to no purpose ; if you once cause it to be given out that you are dead, you will certainly be considered and treated as such ; and the burden of proof to the contrary ever afterwards rests upon yourself ; you will be considered dead until you have clearly proved yourself alive. Whether, in the case referred to, the proof ought to have satisfied the “Messenger,” we pretend not to decide ; it certainly did not, and that is enough to settle the point we have been stating.

The “Characteristics of Women” are universally known. But one opinion has ever been expressed of their rare merits. Everybody, perhaps, will not agree with all of Mrs. Jameson’s views upon each of the Shakspearian women ; for it is a wonderful testimony to the miraculous genius of Shakspeare, that we discuss the motives and characters of his personages just as we discuss the characters of real life, and form different opinions of them, according to the light in which they happen to strike us, or according to our own peculiar turn of thought or moral feeling ; and this remark does not apply to the characters of any other dramatist whatever. But, whether we agree or not with Mrs. Jameson’s views, we must admit that she has studied Shakspeare’s women profoundly ; that she has scrutinized them with a keenness never surpassed ; that she has sympathized with them as woman alone can sympathize with the sufferings and emotions of her sex, whether in fiction or reality. She has sometimes made more of them, perhaps, than ever entered the mind of Shakspeare. To his teeming invention, human beings formed of airy nothing crowded together with a sort of visionary reality, and then vanished away ; just as breathing and moving beings in the thronged metropolis pass before the spectator’s eye, and a moment after disappear. Some notion of their real qualities is impressed upon the spectator’s mind, and, were he to embody it in works of art, the student would evolve from those works completely unfolded characters, by making the unknown harmonious with the known ; characters, which, in

their completeness, the artist never conceived, and yet, which may be strictly accordant with nature. This is what Mrs. Jameson has done for Shakspeare's women ; and the manner in which she has done it is so marked with taste, right feeling, ingenuity, and magnificent eloquence, that her book will always be read with delight, wherever Shakspeare is studied, that is, wherever European civilization extends. Mrs. Jameson's illustrations of her views upon dramatic characters, drawn from the works of the great masters in the fine arts, are of the highest order of merit, and lend an irresistible charm to the book by the multitude of beautiful associations which they excite. On the whole, considered as a book of criticism, the "Characteristics of Women" may be placed very nearly at the head of that department of literature ; on a level at least with, if not higher than, the celebrated lectures of the Schlegels.

Mrs. Jameson's next work, the "Visits and Sketches," was less elaborately written, but showed the same general traits. Her sketches of Germany, especially of the artists of Germany, were thrown off with great vivacity, and a passionate love of her subject. To the English and American public, they conveyed a great deal of information about the men and things of that studious land. The account of Retsch, the illustrator of Goethe and Shakspeare, dwells upon our mind as a fine passage in the book, and a beautiful specimen of Mrs. Jameson's peculiar powers. The "Winter Sketches and Summer Rambles in Canada," is a still more hastily written book, devoted in part to subjects very different from any that had hitherto employed her pen. The scenery of America, particularly along the northern frontier of the United States, and in Canada, was never more vividly described ; and the literary episodes woven from her studies into the tissue of her book, give it a delicious variety. Mrs. Jameson has published several other works of great merit ; but it is not necessary or desirable to particularize them here. We have only touched rapidly upon a few of her writings, — those most characteristic of her remarkable genius, — by way of introduction to the account, which we now proceed to give, of her last publication, the title of which is placed second at the head of the present article.

It cannot be denied, that German Literature has come to exercise a great influence upon the intellectual character of

Europe and America. We may lament over this fact, or rejoice at it, according to our several points of view ; but we cannot disguise from ourselves its existence. It is thrust upon our notice at every corner of the street ; it stares us in the face from the pages of every literary journal. All the sciences own the power of that influence ; on poetry and criticism it acts still more sensibly. Theology is putting on such a foreign look, that we scarcely recognise our old acquaintance under her masquerading Teutonic garb. Even our good, honest, old-fashioned English language has caught the infection, and from time to time attempts to imitate the indescribable tricks, — the fantastic capers, — the elephantine dances of her High Dutch country cousin. Where all this will end, it passes the wit of man to know. We hope to be able to hold fast our Spensers, our Miltons, our Shakspeares, and our Walter Scotts, at least.

In such a state of the intellectual world, we are interested to know all we can about this extraordinary people. They are incessantly toiling in the great intellectual workshop of the world ; the productions of their great energies are, like the Cyclopean walls of old, the wonder and astonishment of the age. Do these people eat and drink and sleep like the rest of the world ? or have they some principle of vitality denied to other mortals, by which they are enabled to task their intellects beyond other men, without the terrible penalties which the rest of the world have to pay, — the penalties of hypochondria, dyspepsy, broken down bodies, and enfeebled minds ? How is it that a dense population in the heart of Europe, with innumerable princely, ducal, archducal houses, — Highnesses, Serene Highnesses, “ thoroughly illustrious ” without end, — to support ; with all the restraints of etiquette, the hitherto impassable barriers that have separated class from class, with but little commerce, and with comparatively scanty resources of fortune ; how is it that such a population have become the most cosmopolitan people on earth ; have absorbed the intellectual influences of all other nations into their own being ; have become the “ cousin Germans,” as they have wittily been called, of all the world ; have gone back to the remotest period, and breathed into its dry bones the breath of life ; have restored the buried forms of classical and oriental antiquity ; have explored the mysteries of every science, and expounded the principles of every art, with an industry and enthusiasm

hitherto unheard of and unseen? These are questions not easily answered. It is plain that the causes of these marvellous phenomena must lie far below the surface, and in the deepest recesses of the national history and character. The present condition of German society, as indicated by the mirror of literature, has been preparing by influences that have wrought upon it from time immemorial; and to trace out those influences would require volumes, instead of the few pages that we can at present give to the Princess Amelia's plays and Mrs. Jameson's book. But it is equally plain that the peculiar influences of the present age are acting with amazing energy upon the forms and conditions of German society. The democratic tendencies of the times are making themselves felt throughout the heaving mass of German intellect,— *mens agitat molem*,— and the great interests of humanity are preparing a triumph over the narrow spirit of caste, and asserting their claims side by side with the abstractions of philosophy, and the elegancies of poetry and art. A princess of the Royal House of Saxony, with the Styx of etiquette and formality “winding nine times round her,” steps forth, obedient to the genius of the age, breaks through the restraints by which that royal line had been ever before environed, enters the arena of letters, and in a very peculiar department, bears away the palm from her untitled compeers, long before her illustrious rank is known or suspected. In a series of dramas, — among the most remarkable literary phenomena of the age, — she portrays, with unrivalled elegance and rare humor, the features of German common life, and gives a new tone to the theatrical literature of her country. We are indebted to Mrs. Jameson's preface and notes for the following facts in this royal lady's life.

Amelia-Maria-Frederica-Augusta (like the Vicar of Wakefield we love to give the whole name), Duchess and Princess of Saxony, was born in 1794, and is now consequently forty-seven years old. Her father was Prince Maximilian, the youngest son of the Elector Frederic Christian. Her uncle, Frederic Augustus, ruled Saxony for sixty-four years, as Elector and king, — as Elector from 1763 to 1806, and as king from 1806 to 1827. The Princess Amelia was ten years old when her mother the Princess of Parma died, in 1804. Her education was conducted by her two aunts, the Queen Maria Amelia, and the Princess Maria Theresa.

“From this time till 1815, the Princess Amelia shared in all the vicissitudes of her family ; saw her uncle-king twice exiled from his estates, and twice restored, a prisoner and again on his throne ; and during these chances and changes and reverses, which occurred during the most momentous period of a woman’s life, from the age of twelve to that of three and twenty, what Amelia of Saxony with all her good and rare gifts of nature, her quick perceptions and quick sympathies, might be feeling and thinking and suffering and learning, we have no means of ascertaining ; only the result is before us, and it is most remarkable. Would not any one have imagined that the tremendous drama played before her eyes, the sound of battle-thunder in her ears, would have given a high poetical turn to her mind, — inspired gorgeous themes of tragedy, wondrous and pitiful ?

‘ A kingdom for a stage, — princes to act,
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene ? ’ —

No such thing ! Borne on the surface of that great wave which had wrecked and overwhelmed empires, she was floated, as it were, into quite another hemisphere, — the new world of real and popular life ; awakening far more curiosity, sympathy, and interest, than the game of war and ambition played by her equals around her. What opportunities were granted to study variety of scenes and variety of characters, — ‘ to grapple with real nature,’ — to extend on every side her sphere of observation, at an age when the fresh youthful mind was warm to every impression, were not then lost, — were, on the contrary, put to most profitable use, though, perhaps, unconsciously. From their retreat at Prague, she returned with her family, in 1815, to inhabit the palace of her ancestors at Dresden, — a very different being, I imagine, from what she would have been had she never left it ; yet — no, I correct myself, — not different in *being*, but different in *working*. The nature would have been there, — the power ; but would it ever have received the current stamp of authenticity, which only act and performance could give it ? — that is the point.” — Vol. 1. *Introduction*, pp. xxxvii — xxxix.

After the restoration of her family, the Princess accompanied her father to Italy, one of her younger sisters being the wife of the present Grand Duke of Tuscany, and another having married his father, the late Grand Duke. Her younger sister married Ferdinand the Seventh, of Spain, who is said to have offered his hand first to the Princess Amelia. In 1824 she paid a visit of some months to her sister in

Spain. In 1827, her uncle King Frederic Augustus died, and was succeeded by his brother Anthony. In 1830, the government of Saxony was changed from a despotism to a limited monarchy, with an Upper and Lower House of Assembly, and Prince Maximilian, the father of Amelia, resigned his claims in favor of his son Frederic, who assumed the government, with the title of Crown Prince and Co-Regent of Saxony. Prince Maximilian lived in complete seclusion from this time until his death. In 1833 the Princess sent her drama of "*Lüge und Wahrheit*" (Falsehood and Truth), to the Court Theatre at Berlin, under the assumed name of Amelia Heiter. It remained unnoticed until February, 1834, when it was represented at the private theatre of the Prinzessinnen-Pallast, on the birthday of the Princess of Mecklenburg, a daughter of the King of Prussia. It became at once universally popular, and was successfully produced on every stage in Germany. In the same year her "*Braut aus der Residenz*" (The Bride from Town), made its appearance, and this was followed by the "*Verlobung's-Ring*" (Betrothal Ring), which was performed at Berlin in 1835. "*Die Fürstenbraut*" (The Princely Bride) soon after appeared, and was played for the first time at Dresden. This was succeeded in the same year by "*Der Oheim*" (The Uncle), which is considered by many her masterpiece, and is said to be the most popular of her dramas. Early in 1836, she produced "*Der Landwirth*" (The Farmer), which is commonly ranked next to "*The Uncle*." Her next production was "*Der Zögling*" (The Protégé), translated by Mrs. Jameson "*The Young Ward*." In the same year she gave "*Das Fräulein vom Lande*" (The Country Girl), and "*Der Unentschlossene*" (The Irresolute Man), which was performed at Dresden. "*Vetter Heinrich*" (Cousin Henry), and "*Der Pflegevater*" (The Foster-Father), appeared in 1837, and "*Der Majoräts-erbe*" (the Heir to the Entail) in 1838. These were soon followed by "*Die Unbelesene*" (The Woman without Reading); since which, Mrs. Jameson states, two other pieces have appeared in Germany.

Here is a life of extraordinary literary activity for any one, — fifteen or sixteen dramas in about eight years; for a princess, actually wonderful. The merits of these pieces, both as literary performances, and as ingenious pictures of German society, are most remarkable. Mrs. Jameson suggests

the comparison between them and the novels of Miss Jane Austen ; and the comparison is just in the main, but will turn out to the advantage of the Princess. Nothing can surpass the minute fidelity of Miss Austen's family pictures, nor the skill with which she has worked up the materials of everyday life, — absolutely everyday life, without the least disguise or poetical coloring, — into tales of exceeding interest. But she never rises above this sphere of characters ; she never idealizes in the least ; she never utters a brilliant or striking sentiment, or soars with strong flight into the regions of eloquence ; and this the Princess Amelia often does, the dictum of Mrs. Jameson to the contrary notwithstanding. She has a profounder insight into the depths of character and passion than Miss Austen ; and the plots of her dramas excite a deeper interest, and call into play stronger feelings than those of Miss Austen's novels. The variety of characters, distinctly drawn, is also greater in the plays than in the novels. We should say that Miss Austen was the closer observer of external peculiarities, while the Princess Amelia had more of creative genius ; the former delineates manners and little scenes of common life with minuter care ; the latter touches the chords of the passions with a bolder hand. The former is more strictly national in her delineations ; the latter, without ever violating her nationality, blends more of a cosmopolitan interest in hers. The former is exclusively English ; the latter is very German, and something besides.

Of the manners and person of the Princess, Mrs. Jameson says ;

“ It will perhaps be a satisfaction to you to know, that I thought her deportment and personal appearance very much in harmony with the benign and womanly character of her works. She has a fine open brow, a clear, penetrating blue eye, and a mingled expression of benevolence and *finesse* lurking round her small mouth. Her manners are, for a Princess, not so much what you would call gracious, as simple and cordial ; altogether she struck me as a very pleasing, lively, kind-hearted person.”

To go a little more into detail with regard to this royal lady's peculiar genius. The volumes of her dramas which now lie before us contain a most interesting exhibition of rare intellectual endowments, and sound moral feeling. She has drawn a great variety of characters, and placed them with singular effect in most of the common relations of life. She

has, like Miss Edgeworth, represented the fatal consequences of a single departure from perfect veracity, in her "*Falsehood and Truth.*" She has, in the same piece, forcibly represented the temporary power which the passion for a young and beautiful woman may exercise over a high-principled man, in compelling him, strongly against his will, to assent, time and again, to what his conscience tells him is wrong ; and the gradual dissipation of the charm, when his conscience is thoroughly awakened to the character of the tortuous policy of his mistress. In young Meerfeld, she has drawn an admirable portrait of the straight-forward merchant, who considers the signature to his marriage contract "at least as sacred as that to a bill of exchange." The contrast between this personage and Juliana is most skilfully managed, and their final union is brought about, improbable as such an event may at first sight appear, in such a way as to reconcile the seeming incongruities of character and principle, and to satisfy us that all will be well ; that he is just the husband to mould her character to honor and truth, and that she is just the woman to form the happiness of the young merchant, by her beauty, wit, and accomplishments ; that her repentance for her past insincerity is deep and sincere, and that her reformation will be made lasting by the example of spotless integrity held up to her in the daily conduct of Meerfeld. The character of Frederica, in the same play, is an exquisite creation ; or rather an exquisite delineation from nature. A young and lovely woman,—dependent upon an uncle, who is too busy with the world's affairs to understand her intellectual powers and to prize her moral worth,—placed in daily contrast with the spoiled daughter of the house, in whose presence her simple and unpretending nature stands abashed, and by whose haughty spirit her lowly shrinking modesty is utterly despised,—Frederica, unobserved by all but her affectionate nurse Christine, silently goes on from day to day, discharging her unostentatious duties, filling her mind with all good knowledge, nurturing her moral being with the high and heroic sentiments of poetry, kindling her imagination with the masterpieces of the literature in her mother tongue, until at last the beauty and power of her character break upon the astonished minds of those around her, and she wins the wavering heart of Willmar, and her meekness humbles the arrogance of her conceited fine-lady cousin.

The play of "The Uncle" has been, according to Mrs. Jameson, the most successful of all the dramas of the Princess.

"The causes of its success," she remarks, "lie deep in the peculiar habits and sympathies of the German character ; it is, in fact, the most essentially *German* of all these comedies, the one least likely to be understood in England. Some of those scenes which I remember to have been most effective on the stage, would not be comprehended by any English audience ; would appear perhaps flat in effect and puerile in sentiment,—perhaps provoke a smile, where feelings of a very opposite nature would be excited in Germany. We are in England almost as much the slaves of certain arbitrary associations as the French themselves, while the Germans are less subjected to the influence of conventional ridicule than any people among whom I have lived. To make an old bachelor, a physician, a recluse philosopher, who feeds birds and dries butterflies, the serious hero and lover of the drama, is an idea which certainly would not have entered into the mind of any common playwright. Yet this original conception has been here most happily executed, without the slightest violation of nature or probability, as far as German manners or feelings are concerned. Dr. Löwe, with his personal negligence and mental refinement, his childlike simplicity and moral grandeur, in the beautiful blending of homeliness, sentiment, humor, and pathos, is one of the happiest and most perfect delineations I have met with in the German modern drama."

The remarks above cited are generally true ; but a correct appreciation of such a character as that of Dr. Löwe is not so exclusively confined to Germany as Mrs. Jameson seems to suppose. We have no idea what would be its effect upon the English or American stage ; and that is a matter of small importance. The English and American stage is now too degraded to be taken into the account in any estimate of literary merit. The leading purpose of dramatic literature at the present day,—so far as concerns England and the United States,—is to supply amusing and instructive reading, by furnishing animated pictures of life and representations of the passions, brought out with more vivacity than belongs to the nature of other forms of literary composition. Tried by this standard, the character of Dr. Löwe will excite as much sympathy among English and American as it can among German readers.

The play of "The Uncle" has several other characters as well drawn in their way as the hero. Madame von Stürmer,

the *malade imaginaire* is extremely amusing ; and the doctor's prescriptions for her case are worthy of the best attention of the Faculty. The effect of the interview with Anna, upon the bachelor Doctor, is very well hit off in the following passage.

“ MARTIN (*alone*).

“ I wish I could find out what in the name of wonder has possessed my master : he is quite transmogrified, as it were — quite rebellious ! First he abuses me when I tell him of the colonel's arrival ; then he sets off to him, humming a tune as he goes along the streets ; then, when he comes home, he locks himself up in his study, writes a letter, and gives it to Rosine to take, and not to me. I begin to be afraid it's not all right ; suppose he were to get crazed in his old age, — O Lord ! O Lord !

Enter LöWE.

LÖWE.

Martin, I have been talking to the Kreigsrath Lindner. I have spoken to Caroline, and I am happier than words can express !

MARTIN.

How so, your honor ?

LÖWE.

Caroline, — only think, Martin, — she is betrothed ! — 't was as if a millstone had fallen from my heart when I heard it.

MARTIN.

How so, your honor ?

LÖWE.

Ah ! I remember me you know nothing about it. (*Aside.*) Now I have the means of soothing Julius, if he should be vexed with his uncle's marriage ; but he shall know nothing of his happiness yet, — I will surprise him. (*Aloud.*) Martin, what I have just told you is between ourselves.

MARTIN.

Why, your honor has told me nothing yet !

LÖWE (*looking round*).

This room is in horrible disorder, Martin.

MARTIN.

It is just as it always is.

LÖWE.

Every thing covered with dust.

MARTIN.

And yet it is swept every Easter and every Michaelmas.

LÖWE.

I'll have it swept every day ; people are coming in from

time to time, and it's scandalous to see the dust flying in their faces. (*Looking round again.*) What a household! the book-cases empty, the books lying about on tables and chairs ——

MARTIN (*sulkily*).

I'm not to meddle with them.

LÖWE.

No, not you, — certainly; I'll put them in their places myself.

MARTIN (*aside, shaking his head*).

He's a going to die! *

LÖWE.

Martin!

MARTIN.

Sir!

LÖWE.

This Madame von Stürmer, whom I have just taken under my care, will give me a good deal of trouble.

MARTIN.

That's the lady that sent the pretty maid here this morning?

LÖWE.

The maid happens to be a young lady, and her daughter.

MARTIN.

A lady! and I treated her just as my equal! † but it's not my fault, however. If she's a lady, why doesn't she dress like one, — more reasonable like?

LÖWE.

The dress makes the woman and the man too, — eh, Martin? Ay, it's inconceivable what effect dress has, even on the most rational people. I think I might dress better myself.

MARTIN (*frightened*).

Pray, sir, — I hope you won't begin to think of such a thing!

LÖWE.

And why not?

MARTIN.

At your years!

LÖWE.

Why, I am not such an old man, Martin.

MARTIN.

But we are no longer young, your honor.

* * It is a German, as well as an Irish and a Scotch superstition, that any sudden and unaccountable change in the manners and disposition is the certain prelude of death."

† Martin remembers with consternation that he had used the wrong pronoun when addressing her: *Ein Fräulein! und ich habe sie par "höre Sie" tractirt!*"

LÖWE.

How? — *we!* — you talk as if we were nearly of the same age.

MARTIN.

Why, when I first attended on you at the university, we were both hearty young fellows.

LÖWE.

Ay, but I was eighteen, and you forty.

MARTIN.

Only nine-and-thirty, your honor.

LÖWE.

And I shall be eight-and-thirty in September.

MARTIN.

As your honor pleases.

LÖWE.

Martin, I shall go to that tailor who keeps all kinds of fashionable clothes ready made, and I'll choose myself a new coat.

MARTIN.

Then you'll look just like a wasp.

LÖWE.

No, no, — no such thing: he has coats fit for rational people to wear.

MARTIN (*aside*).

If I could only conjure him out of this paroxysm! (*Aloud.*) Have you been to the church-yard to-day, sir?

LÖWE.

To the church-yard? — no.

MARTIN.

Then you'll go this evening?

LÖWE.

I don't think I will.

MARTIN.

The weather's cleared up, sir.

LÖWE.

Glad of it; but I feel as if, — and yet what should hinder me? (*Aside.*) My good Marie! she too would rejoice if she knew how happy I am going to be. Shall I therefore forget *her*? O no, never!

MARTIN.

My dear master, either you are ill, or there is something on your mind that you can't get over.

LÖWE.

Why, there is something on my mind, Martin, if you will know it, — something, — but you must not laugh at me, Martin! What would you say if I —

MARTIN.

Well, sir ?

LÖWE.

If now, for instance, I ——

MARTIN.

If what ?

LÖWE.

If — I — should ——

MARTIN.

If you should ?——

LÖWE.

If I — you see — if I should marry — a wife ! ——

MARTIN (*in terror*).

The Lord in heaven shield you !

LÖWE (*angrily*).

The Lord might shield me from worse, I think."

— Vol. 1. pp. 212–218.

The character of Anna, the beautiful English heiress, is very well drawn ; and the transfer of her affections from the young baron Julius, to his bachelor uncle, is managed with infinite skill. She had engaged herself to the former, from mere kindness of heart and the hope of making something worthy of her devotion out of the plausible, but unsteady young scapegrace ; but when she came in contact with solid merit, like that of the doctor, these flimsy grounds of attachment gave way at once before the force of lofty principles, and a noble character. We finish reading the piece with a conviction that Julius will repent of his inconstancy to Caroline ; that the doctor will enjoy all the felicity he so richly merits ; and that Madame Stürmer's maladies are cured for ever. At least we hope, for the comfort of all parties, that such is her ladyship's case.

The characters and plot of "The Young Ward" are more peculiarly German than those of either play in Mrs. Jameson's first volume. The Countess von Werdenbach, a rich and noble widow, is intrusted with the care of Count Robert von Hallerfeld, an orphan. Ida von Grünau is her niece, a young girl whose school education is not yet completed. Hallerfeld's character is that of a romantic youth, who falls desperately in love with a woman much older than himself, that woman being his father's friend, his own benefactress. Salome, an old house servant, and Ida's nurse, and her uncle Baron von Grünau have set their hearts on a marriage between the young people ; but their excellent designs are for the time frustrated by discovering who is the real object of the young Baron's

passion. Despairing of ever obtaining the forgiveness of the Countess, for his presumptuous hopes, Baron Robert determines to desert his *carrière*, travel into foreign parts, and lose, in the dissipations of Paris and London, the sense of his sufferings. The feelings of the enthusiastic young gentleman, with his heart bubbling over with what he fancies to be love for a woman some fifteen years older than himself, are described with great force and humor. The Countess resolves on a bold stratagem to save her young ward from ruin. She gives him reason to hope for the fulfilment of his wishes at some future day, when he shall have distinguished himself in the career he has begun ; at the same time she puts into his hands a sealed paper, which contains her justification, and is to be opened on the day of their formal betrothal. Of course, our young gentleman, having the best of reasons, — to wit, the mature conviction of a man of twenty, — to know that his passion for the Countess is an everlasting one, stands now upon the topmost round of human happiness, and resumes his diplomatic labors with extraordinary alacrity, after having cut a few capers, such as young gentlemen in his situation are wont to exhibit, and squeezing old Grünau almost to death in his frantic joy. Ida is sent off to a boarding school to finish her education, sorely against the will of uncle Grünau and the nurse ; and the Countess exposes herself consequently to the harsh and uncharitable constructions of her kindred and acquaintances. Affairs are now wound up into a pretty, very pretty entanglement ; the plot is a very good plot, and it begins to unravel itself about two years after. The following passage will give us some insight into the course of affairs during the interval.

“IDA (*entering*).

“It made me feel strangely to see him again. In the last two years he has grown more manly, — handsomer, I think. Fortunately, he did not know me ; for when I saw him standing there, — the man in office, — the secretary of legation, — and thought of all the childish nonsense of old times, I felt almost painfully confused, — but that will not be the case another time, when other people are by, and my aunt presents him to me formally. I know not when I was so pleased as at the idea of our breakfast to-day ; a *bal champêtre* in the open air is something new, — for me at least. O, I will dance, — dance all day, every dance from beginning to end ! I feel so happy,

and in such spirits ! — it must be this beautiful weather, — of course.

Enter the COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

All is in full activity in the garden, and I think I see some carriages coming over the hill yonder, — our guests probably ; we shall have thirty people together in all.

IDA.

Has my uncle Grünau accepted your invitation ?

COUNTESS.

I would wage any thing that uncle Grünau is the first to arrive. He brings Count Bibereck with him.

IDA.

O, I 'm so glad ! I like that Count Bibereck.

COUNTESS (*smiling*).

Why, yes, he has always abundance of pretty things for a young lady's ear.

IDA.

O, it is not *that* ; — but he amuses me, and besides — — (*she stops suddenly*).

COUNTESS.

I have invited him, to gratify Hallerfeld. They were school-fellows, you know.

IDA.

Do you know, my dear aunt, that I have already seen Hallerfeld this morning ?

COUNTESS.

Indeed ! where did you see him ?

IDA.

In the village, and before the door of old Margaret's house. I had persuaded her, for the first time, to venture into the open air ; he stopped as soon as he saw me, and looked at me for some time without stirring ; but he did not approach, nor did he speak. So I suppose he did not recognise me.

COUNTESS.

Probably not, for I doubt if he knows that you are here.

IDA.

Yes ; I came from school, I remember, just as he was appointed *attaché* at Vienna ; and you have not, I suppose, mentioned me in your letters to him ?

COUNTESS.

Why, I do not think that during the whole year any particular good or evil fortune has befallen you, sufficient for the subject-matter of a letter.

IDA (*with a forced smile*).

I dare say he hardly recollects that I once lived under the same roof with him.

COUNTESS.

So much the better, for it will be like making a new acquaintance to-day. Have you arranged your toilette ?

IDA.

I intend to be dressed simply, — quite simply.

COUNTESS.

Simply, — yes ; but with elegance and taste, I hope ?

IDA.

O surely ! and at this moment I cannot decide between two dresses, — the white and the blue.

COUNTESS.

Choose then, for my sake, the one that is most becoming. I wish you to appear to advantage to-day, — you understand !

IDA.

O trust me for that ! you know, dear aunt, I am not vainer than is absolutely necessary : but at a ball, and a ball by daylight, one would not be the worst looking. (*She goes to the door and returns.*) Don't you think, aunt, it would be best to wear the white dress ? it is *sans prétension*, and looks so fresh !

COUNTESS.

Yes, right ! (*She goes towards the writing-table, — Ida going, stops, as meditating, and then turns back.*)

IDA.

On reflection, dear aunt, I think, after all, the blue is the prettiest.

COUNTESS.

Dress yourself as you please, my love. (*Ida goes out, — the Countess seats herself at her writing-table, opens a small writing-case, and takes out a parcel of letters.*) His letters to me during the last twelvemonth, — truly a respectable collection. Let us see, — (*she opens two or three,*) — July, last year, four pages, — five, — six pages, — ‘Most beloved of human beings !’ — *etcetera*. In December two pages, — three, — “My dearest Countess,” and so forth. In April this year, so, — one page, — ‘Ever honored friend !’ — ah, April was a bad month, it seems ! But what have we here ? — alas ! worse, — in June last, — half a page, — business, — want of time, — and ‘My dear madam !’ — O men, men ! — but is it your fault if the enthusiasm to which you give the name of love does not last for ever ? Ought we not even to be thankful when such feelings subside into calm friendship, and not into absolute indifference ?” — Vol. II. pp. 90 — 95.

The amount of it is that Hallerfeld has found out that his eternal love lasted considerably less than two years, — precisely what the Countess had the good sense to anticipate ; and that he has fallen in love with the Countess Ida, — and

that, too, is what was anticipated and desired. Arrangements, however, are making for a festival, which the Countess gives Hallerfeld to understand is to end in the betrothal. The conflict in the young man's mind between feeling and honor, between love and duty, is well managed; honor and duty maintain their ground, and he is resolved to devote his future life to the happiness of the woman whom he once so passionately loved, and now so deeply reverences. But "all's well that ends well;" the Baron's good intentions are rewarded by the possession of Ida's hand; the sealed paper explains every thing, and everybody is as happy as happy can be.

There is much grace and delicacy in the delineations of character in this piece. The Countess-widow is beautifully drawn, and the young Baron is true, not merely to German, but to universal nature. The conception of such a character shows a deeper insight into the springs of human feeling than is common among princes, — or other people either. Old Grüнау, the fidgetty, self-willed, gossiping uncle, has, we are sorry to say it, many counterparts among the bachelor uncles of other countries besides Germany.

"The Princely Bride" is a play that moves in a different sphere of German life. Its characters are royal personages and their attendants; and it may be expected that they will be delineated with even more truth and fidelity than those drawn from common life. Upon this point we cannot speak with confidence, as we are but plain republicans, and know but little of courts and courtly people. Mrs. Jameson says;

"Never perhaps was a courtly group sketched off with such finished delicacy, such life-like truth; such perfect knowledge of, and command over the materials employed. We have no other instance, I think, of the portrait of a princess delineated by the hand of a princess, and informed with sentiments and feelings drawn possibly from her own nature, or at least suggested by her own position. It is easy to conceive that one cause of this drama not being oftener performed is the very truth of the picture it represents. I have been told that at the Burg Theatre at Vienna, it was set aside, because it was not thought decorous to exhibit all the details of a modern court upon the stage; and, as almost all the theatres of Germany are attached to the court of some sovereign prince, and form a part of his state establishment, subject to his pleasure, the same feeling may have prevailed elsewhere."

However this may be, the character of the "Princely

Bride" is one of the most interesting in the whole range of these dramas. The portrait is most delicately finished, and the effect delightful. A marriage has been arranged between her and a young neighbouring German prince, by the usual diplomatic formalities, in such cases made and provided. The prince, however, under the disguise of an assumed name, has had an interview with a person whom he supposes to be his future bride ; and, under this idea, he has carried on a correspondence with her, which deepens the impression her personal charms have already made. When she is conducted to his capital, he is, of course, in a flutter of joyful expectation ; and his astonishment and dismay, when he becomes aware of the fatal mistake, form what may be called the distress of the piece. Under these embarrassing circumstances, the gentleness and nobleness of the heroine are conspicuously brought out. The character is one which could only be drawn by a woman ; the minute and delicate traits, the mingled sweetness and strength, the devoted love, and the martyr-like readiness to sacrifice herself for the happiness of others, as they belong eminently to the character of woman in its noblest form, so they require the graceful hand of woman to portray them as they should be portrayed. There are many scenes in this delightful drama, that deserve to be quoted. Still the effect of the piece depends, in a peculiar degree, upon reading the whole together ; and we would rather send our readers to the book, than do the principal character an injustice by presenting it in a partial and imperfect light.

The last play translated by Mrs. Jameson is "*Der Landwirth*," *The Farmer*, to whom she has given the title of "*The Country Cousin*." There is great spirit and vivacity in the scenes of this piece ; much variety in the characters ; and a great deal of humor. Young Edward von Thürmer, the gay and fashionable heir, is finely contrasted with the noble qualities of his cousin Rudolph, who has been brought up amidst the employments of a farm. Dame Beatrice is an excellent fussy manager, — a notable housewife, — such, alas ! as this degenerate age has but few to boast of. The plot of the drama may be stated in a few words. The old Baron von Thürmer has wrongfully possessed himself of an estate which should have gone to his elder brother, the father of Rudolph. The latter is, therefore, educated in the country, and after a fashion suitable to his supposed condition. The growth and developement of his moral and intellectual nature, amidst

the influences of a quiet country life, are finely shadowed forth by the incidents of the drama. Edward is educated like a young man of fashion, the heir to the estates and titles of the old Baron. He visits Prague, to become acquainted with the Count von Leistenfeld, his father's early friend, and the Count's daughter, his own destined bride. But being a somewhat imaginative, sentimental, and self-conceited personage, he takes the whim into his head to appear under the name and character of his country cousin, and attempts to excite the young Countess's interest by playing the melancholy poor gentleman ; and to a certain extent succeeds. All this is quite delightful ; and he has returned, when our drama opens, with the pleasing conviction that his future bride loves him for himself alone. The old Count and his daughter make a visit to the country seat of the Baron von Thürmer, partly for the purpose of concluding the matrimonial arrangements already begun by the old people, and so happily seconded by Edward, as he supposes, during his visit *incog.* to Prague. An accident, however, brings the young Countess and the rustic Rudolph acquainted, neither knowing who the other may be. The prospect of the approaching visit compels Edward to let his father into the masquerade he had been playing during his travels. The old gentleman calls him a fool, — as indeed he was, — but finally consents to continue the farce a little longer, warning his son, however, that the event might be somewhat different from his anticipations. When Rudolph visits the castle, he is of course mistaken by the Count and Countess for the veritable Edward ; and the young lady is not in the least sorry to discover in the unknown but agreeable and handsome young man, with whom she had conversed in the morning, her destined husband.

But before making her final answer to the suit, — before giving the irrevocable *Jawort*, she determines to subject his integrity to a trying test. She has become possessed of the evidence of the old Baron's fraudulent dealings with his nephew ; this evidence she is resolved to lay before the supposed Edward, and if he will at once renounce his father's ill-gotten wealth in favor of the injured Rudolph, then to accept his hand. The decisive moment arrives ; the fatal paper is put into her rural lover's hands, and to her infinite disappointment, when the first surprise is past, he thrusts the document into the fire, and it is reduced to ashes. Of course, she is indignant and wretched ; but when the truth is

known, and she finds that it is Rudolph himself, who has burnt the only remaining evidence of his right to the Thürmer estates and title, and all this to shield his uncle from dishonor, her admiration knows no bounds, and she surrenders her heart at once and for ever. Poor Edward must wear the willow with what grace he may. He has merely excited her compassion, — touched her fancy a little, it may be, — by his melancholy airs at Prague under the assumed character of his cousin. But the end shows that he has completely overshot his mark, and Rudolph is rewarded with the happiness which his noble and disinterested conduct so richly merited.

We have thus given some account of those plays of the Princess Amelia, which Mrs. Jameson has translated. They are only a small specimen of the whole ; a pretty fair specimen, it is true, but not the most entertaining part. The translation is executed with spirit, and generally with fidelity to the original ; and the English is marked by the purity and sprightliness, which characterize Mrs. Jameson's other writings. But the numerous idiomatic terms of the original are not always faithfully rendered. Mrs. Jameson has frequently substituted a comparatively tame periphrasis or vague generality, for a popular proverb or pithy saying of the original. It is true, that the English language does not always afford an exact equivalent for such proverbs and sayings ; but a little care will, in nine cases out of ten, enable a translator to find something very near them. The trouble seems to be, that English writers are terribly afraid of being vulgar, and look with suspicion upon all expressions, which smack of the popular mind. The consequence is, that a large number of pithy turns of speech lie unemployed, except in the conversation of the people ; and the force and picturesqueness of English style lose materially by this false gentility.

No one, we think, can read the plays of the Saxon Princess, without feeling a profound respect for the fine qualities of her heart, and the brilliant powers of her mind. Her sympathies far transcend the lines of the courtly circle around her ; she comprehends and loves the great and good qualities of her countrymen, and knows how to portray them with marvellous skill. She sees perfectly well the foibles of men and women, but looks upon them with an indulgent eye. The passions of youth and the vices of manhood and age are not unknown to her keenly observant spirit, and have not escaped her good-humored satire. It is quite amusing to see how often she laughs at the vagaries of young men and women, which they are pleased

to denominate love ; how often, in her plays, people begin by being desperately enamoured of one person, and end by marrying another. Willmar, in "Falsehood and Truth," thinks himself incurably in love with Juliana, but forms a happy marriage with Frederica. Dr. Löwe remains faithful some eighteen years to the memory of his Marie, and then suddenly surrenders his heart to Anna, who as suddenly breaks off from her lover, the young Baron, who on his part has deserted his first love, Caroline, to whom he again returns. Hallerfeld at one time thinks life not worth the having, unless he can marry the Countess Werdenbach, and a year or two after finds there is no happiness but in marriage with Ida. In "The Princely Bride," the prince at dinner is in despair for the love of Matilda, but before seven o'clock, the well-being of his whole life depends on marrying the princess ; Matilda, too, gets over her fancy for the prince in the course of the day, and gives her hand to Major von Sollau. In the "Landwirth," Marie von Leistenfeld is one day half in love with Edward von Thürmer, and the next wholly so with Rudolph, whom she marries. In "Der Verlobung's-Ring," *The Betrothal Ring*, (by the by, one of the best pieces in the whole collection, and as well worth translating as any Mrs. Jameson has selected,) Francisca von Falkenberg is betrothed to the Count von Wildenhain, but has had her head completely turned by reading, to the great vexation of the old gentleman her father. She falls desperately in love with her cousin, Adolph, who has risked his neck to recover her lost scarf, and held it next his heart, and thus won *her* heart from the staid and more rational bridegroom ; but when he, like a man of sense, sets her at liberty, and no obstacle stands in the way of her marriage with her gallant cousin, presto, the delusion vanishes, the young lovers become tired of each other, and she sighs for Wildenhain again, and marries him.

The same thing comes up in one form or another in several more of these dramas. In fact, it seems as if the Princess were aiming constantly to guard the young against the delusions of passion and imagination. She has undoubtedly exaggerated the whimsical freaks and sudden turnings of what boys and girls take to be everlasting attachment ; but there is a basis of truth in her representations, and a great deal of wisdom in the lesson she indirectly inculcates. Her men are not, generally, so well drawn as her women. They all are the creations of a female mind, and have a vein of womanishness in their characters, that betrays their origin

to the masculine eye. It is said, too, that her pictures of German society are sometimes unnatural and perhaps impossible ; this may to some extent be true. There are many traits of common life, that must, of necessity, escape the observation of a royal personage, however keen and vigilant ; but we think she approaches, even in this respect, as near to the truth of nature as any other dramatist who has aimed at painting contemporary manners. The truth is, the drama is not, never was, and never can be, a very exact transcript of the details of common social life. But no one, at all familiar with German literature, will hesitate, we think, to say, that these pieces are true to the essential spirit of the German character ; that they faithfully represent its honest-heartedness, its romantic and poetical cast of thought, its love of simple nature, and its freedom from conventional sentiment and manners. The language, — the German style, — is admitted, on all hands, to be elegant, descriptive, and pure. It abounds, as we said before, in national idioms ; but it is an excellent model of the conversational style among the best educated classes. Some of the female characters in these dramas are among the most exquisite creations of Poetry. No reader of sensibility can ever forget the mild beauties of Frederica ; the gentle and affectionate and trustful spirit of the Hedwig, in “*Der Pflegevater*” ; the simple, but noble and high-hearted Dorothea, in “*Das Fräulein vom Lande*” ; or the magnanimity of the “*Princely Bride*.” They are all characters, who stand forth in our memory as lovely impersonations of all that is at once human and angelic in woman ; as realizing the dreams of poetry, but not transcending the possibilities of earthly life. Of each of them, we may say with the philosophical poet ;

“ I saw her upon nearer view,
 A spirit, yet a woman too !
 Her household motions light and free,
 And steps of virgin liberty ;
 A countenance in which did meet
 Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
 A creature not too bright and good
 For human nature's daily food.

* * * *

A perfect woman, nobly planned
 To warn, to comfort, and command ;
 And yet a spirit still, and bright
 With something of an angel light.”